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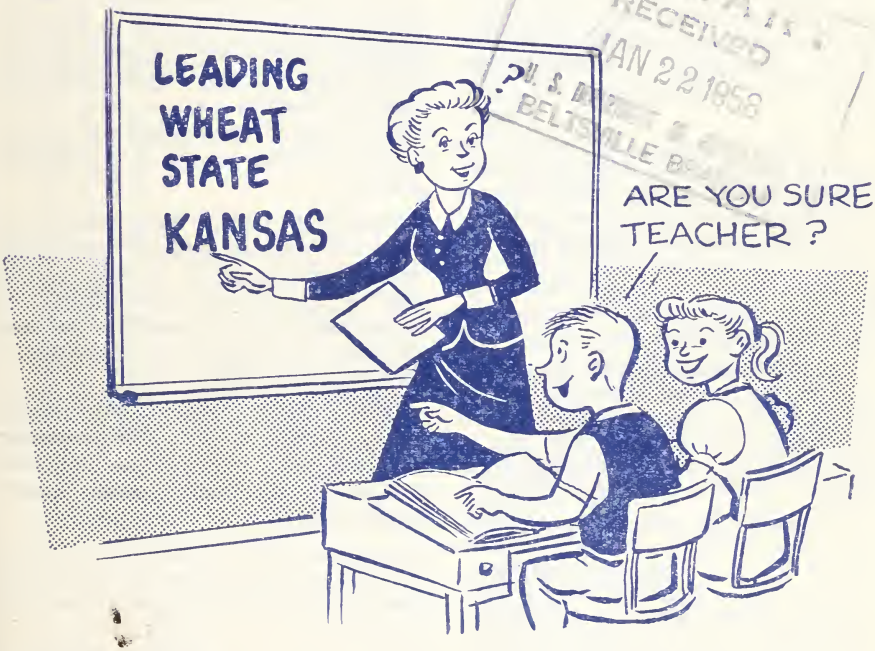

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IS TEACHER RIGHT ABOUT KANSAS?

"Corn comes from the Middle West, oranges from California and Florida, Kansas is the leading wheat State. . . ."

Remember the old fashioned geography classes on drowsy Friday afternoons? Other things they taught us changed sometimes, but every Friday we sing-songed "Kansas is the leading wheat State."

Now, the authors of those textbooks didn't consult the Crop Reporting Board or they would have learned that statement wasn't invariably true. Kansas hasn't topped all other States in wheat production every single year. But it's true that since 1866 when the Board's wheat records begin it has led the Nation oftener than any other State.

In 1957, though, according to the Board's estimates, Kansas slipped to second place in wheat production for the first time since 1951 and only the second time since 1943. More amazing, in 1957, for the first time in 25 years, another crop, sorghum grains, displaced wheat as Kansas' No. 1 crop in terms of production.

The Board estimates 1957 wheat production in Kansas dropped to 100 million bushels from the 1956 figure of 143 million. Sorghum production in 1957 increased to 129 million bushels, compared with 24 million in 1956.

The estimated 1957 Kansas wheat production is, then, almost 29 million bushels below the sorghum production. It is also some 18 million bushels below the production in the State that replaced Kansas as No. 1 wheat producer.

One reason for the increased sorghum production is that Kansans planted nearly 10 percent of their total sorghum acreage in hybrids, which improved yields.

But why the shift from wheat?

State statisticians say the story is complex. Certainly, last year's drought discouraged the planting of winter wheat at the end of 1956. Many a grower put a substantial portion of his normal wheat acreage into the Soil Bank in 1957.

Many of these same growers apparently shifted summer fallow acres to sorghum. This is indicated by the large sorghum production increases in the traditionally heavy wheat producing western counties.

What about 1958? Will wheat production resume its old No. 1 spot in Kansas?

Certainly weather conditions have been excellent for winter wheat, which comprises virtually all the Kansas output. Kansas growers have sharply reduced Soil Bank allocations. Wheat production in 1958 may approximate 197 million bushels.

This figure would be a big increase over even that of 1956. It may well be that children will be learning that "Kansas is the leading wheat State" again in 1958.

Oh, yes. The leading 1957 wheat-producing State was North Dakota. Its production is estimated at 118 million bushels.

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Robert S. McCauley
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HOW WOULD YOU FIGURE YOUR BURLEY YIELD?

The Crop Reporting Board has worked out a method of measuring with considerable accuracy just how much cured tobacco producers may get in burley States.

That's important because per-acre yields of most commodities have taken big jumps in recent years. Surveys verifying reported yields are one of the ways the Crop Reporting Board has of keeping up with them.

How It's Done

The per-acre yield of most crops can easily be determined by measuring off a small fraction of an acre of the mature crop, harvesting and weighing the produce, and making adjustments for such factors as moisture content and harvesting losses.

Burley tobacco is a little more complicated because after it is cut in the field, it must be cured. Then its weight is determined in terms of cured tobacco.

To get per-acre yield for burley, the Crop Reporting Board has found that tobacco plants should be counted in measured row sections while the crop is still standing. Then another visit is paid to the same farms after the tobacco is cured to get the average weight of cured tobacco per plant. These facts known, the rest is largely arithmetic.

A burley count was made in Kentucky on a representative cross-section, 98 fields selected from fields spotted on aerial photographs last June.

In late July, two-man teams counted all the plants in two 50-foot row sections selected at random in each field. The distance between tobacco rows was also measured, to permit computation of the fraction of an acre in a 50-foot row section. This count gave an estimate of 8,164 plants per acre. Of this number, 8,012 plants were healthy. It was reasonable to expect they would be cut at harvest.

In the last week of October, field workers weighed representative plants from the same farm. If stripping was finished, another farm in the neighborhood was taken as an alternate. In mid-November, the farms where stripping had not yet commenced on the previous visit were visited a third time. An alternate was chosen for farms where stripping had then been completed or had not yet started. However, alternates were needed for only 44 farms.

To get tobacco weights, 30 plants were weighed in 6 lots of 5 plants each. After stripping, the stalks were weighed again to determine the weight of the leaves.

Adding the estimated weight of all loose leaves, primed or salvaged, to the weight of the stripped leaves gave a computed average weight of 1,694 pounds per acre. The primed and salvaged leaves accounted for 5 percent of this weight. This figure may be slightly too high if some of the plants that appeared healthy on the first count never actually got to the barn, but the figure can't be very far off.

Now, why did the Crop Reporting Board go to all this trouble? Won't the sales record on the year's crop tell exactly how many pounds of burley were produced in the State?

Purpose of Count

Yes, they will. But people who follow the burley crop need an accurate per-acre yield estimate early in the season to get a line on the probable total production. It's always reassuring, too, when information collected from a number of sources can be verified by the direct measurement methods the Crop Reporting Board has worked out.

Walter A. Hendricks
Charles E. Burkhead
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CATTLE FEEDING: BOOMING BUSINESS

Cattle feeding is a growing industry. Its expansion has helped cattlemen to meet keen competition for the consumer market in this country.

Slaughter of steers increased by almost two-thirds between 1951 and 1957. This nearly equals the 80-percent increase in broiler production during the same period. Actually, the volume of steer beef produced is still almost three times that of commercial broiler meat. It is double the volume of all chicken meat.

Background

Cattle feeding is in its second period of fast growth. The first was in the late 1930's. Then volume nearly doubled. The present period began about 1950 (see chart). As incomes increased after the war, consumers stepped up their demand for beef in general, and, even more, their demand for the higher grades of beef from fed cattle.

Merchandising changes have contributed to stronger demand for U. S. Choice and U. S. Good beef. Recently, enthusiasm for grilling of beef outdoors has increased the demand for high grade beef also.

Another factor leading to more feeding has been a larger production and declining prices for feed. After rising steadily the last few years, the feed harvest set a new high in 1957. Farmers' prices received for feed grains have generally declined since 1951. In November 1957, they were the lowest since 1943.

Moreover, interest in cattle feeding is a typical feature of the peak-supply phase of the cattle cycle. A shift from cow-and-calf operations to feeding was a big factor in the reduction of total cattle numbers that began during 1956 and is still going on.

Finally, cattle feeding has expanded because new technological methods have been used in it more extensively than in any other phase of raising or feeding meat animals. Examples are stilbestrol and use of mechanical feed dispensers in commercial feedlots.

Apart from its general increase, there have been three major changes in feeding operations.

First, feeding is no longer confined to the Corn Belt. It has expanded greatly in the West and is now growing in the South.

Since the early 1930's the western Corn Belt has increased its January 1 inventory of cattle on feed by 60 percent. The eastern Corn Belt has done better, doubling its inventory. But cattle on feed in the West now are 3.5 times more numerous than they were 25 years ago.

California now has 7 times as many cattle on feed as it did in the early 1930's, Washington and Arizona 6 times as many. The West now accounts for a fourth of all cattle on feed January 1 and for an even larger percent of annual marketings of fed cattle.

Second, the feeding period has been shortened. In this, the West has been in the forefront. Feeding in California is intensive and lasts only about 120 days. California cattle are fed to a slightly lower grade than Corn Belt cattle. Fewer reach high Choice or Prime.

Feedlot Refills

California refills its feedlots twice during the year, Colorado once. The Corn Belt feeds a bit shorter than formerly but still will not average a complete second turnover during the year.

Third change is the emphasis on moderately high finish. Fewer coarse and underfinished cattle now go to slaughter, and extremely high finish in

cattle has become less popular as outlets for high U. S. Choice and U. S. Prime beef have shrunk. The range of high Good to middle Choice probably represents both current preference and the direction to which feeding has been going.

The big volume of feeding helped to lift total beef output to its 1956 record high and to keep it almost as large in 1957. This happened not only because of the extra weight to which fed cattle are carried but also because it caused more calves to be retained for feeding instead of being slaughtered as calves.

Calves and Steers

In most past cycles, slaughter of calves increased sharply as total cattle numbers reached and passed their crest. In this cycle, calf slaughter rose until 1954, but stayed almost stable afterward. In 1957, a third more steers than calves were slaughtered under Federal inspection. In 1947, fewer steers than calves went to slaughter.

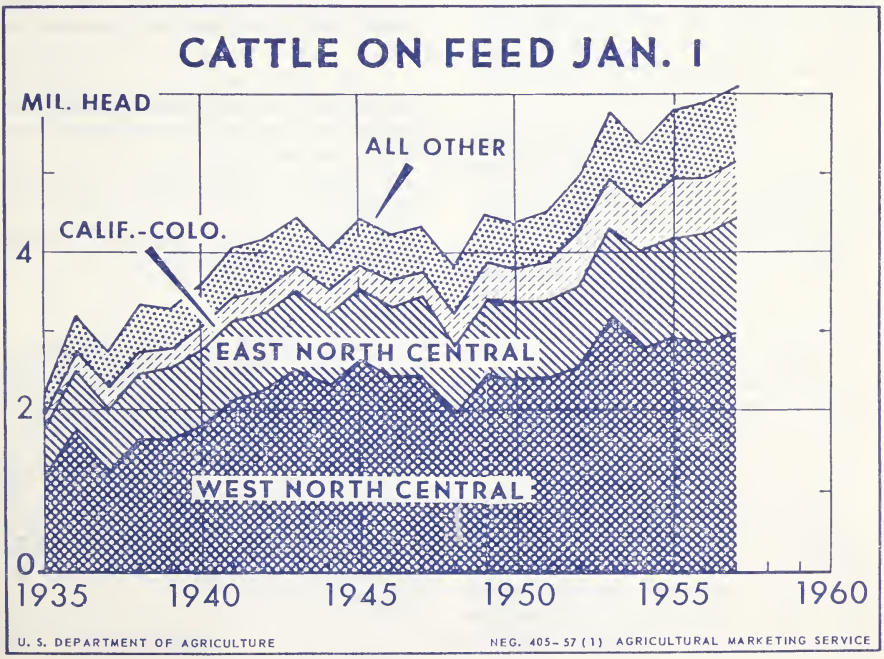
As total cattle numbers are decreasing, declines in slaughter and beef output can be expected for several years. However, if cattle feeding stays large, it could prevent as much of a reduction as often occurs.

In all probability, supplies of beef per person will not drop nearly as much as they did in the previous cycle, which saw a per capita consumption low of 55 pounds in 1951. In this cycle, the low point may be around 75 pounds. (The 1956 peak rate was 84 pounds; 1957, just under 83 pounds.)

If these prospects for supplies prove accurate, prices of cattle will not advance as much as in some earlier cycles. As of now, a runaway cattle price boom is not in sight.

As feeding has been stimulated by declining feed prices, its future volume will depend in part on the future trend in those prices. Unless feed prices should turn sharply upward, the volume of feeding can be expected to continue large or even expand. And if expansion conforms to recent patterns, it will be greatest in the newer feeding areas.

Harold F. Breimyer
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS



GOOD TASTE IS ONE SECRET OF GOOD DAIRY FARMING

Dairy farmers don't retain markets for their milk very long, unless the milk tastes—and smells—good.

That makes it worth the while of every milk producer to sharpen his knowledge of what gives milk that pleasurable odor and flavor—and what takes it away.

The Agricultural Marketing Service has a bulletin "Judging and Scoring Milk" on this subject. The practice of judging milk may be followed by members of quality control staffs of dairies who want to check their incoming milk supply or want to compare their milk with that of competitors. But, obviously, you as a milk producer have an even bigger financial stake and an even greater need to be every bit as good a judge of your milk as any dairy grader.

Smell Important Too

Most people think of milk in terms of flavor and primarily that's the way AMS tackles the problem. But it cautions that the nose is every bit as important as the tongue in judging milk.

The technical explanation is that volatile flavors enter the olfactory passages of the nose from the back of the mouth and the throat; the fact itself is familiar to anyone who has ever uncautiously bitten into bad food.

Here are some of the tastes you definitely DON'T want in your milk—and the reasons why they may be there, just the same.

1. Bitter. This is usually caused by strong feeds or weeds or by conditions present in milk from cows late in the lactation period; less frequently, from bacterial growths, if the milk is held several days at low temperatures.

2. Coarse, acid, sour. This, the most familiar problem, is caused by bacterial growth.

3. Cowy. Generally blame this on your poorly cleaned or poorly ventilated barn. The cow can breathe only the air you provide for her. If the cow isn't feeling up to par, you may get cowy milk.

4. Disinfectant. This comes from leaving residues of strong chlorine or similar solutions in containers in contact with milk.

5. Feed. This can be overcome by feeding strong feeds after milking.

6. Malty. The milk hasn't been properly cooled or milking equipment wasn't properly cleaned.

7. Onion, garlic. This obnoxious weed flavor may render the milk undesirable for use.

8. Metallic. May occur when the milk is allowed to come into contact with corrodible metal, such as galvanized pails, rusty milk cans or lids.

9. Musty. The feed may be musty or the water for your cow may be stagnant.

10. Oxidized. One of the most troublesome milk flavors, caused by contact with such metals as copper and iron.

11. Rancid, like stale fat. It is more noticeable during winter when cows are on dry feed or during the late lactation period.

12. Salty. This could point to mastitis.

13. Watery, flat. Usually its source is difficult to determine.

Training Helps

How to detect these bad flavors? A good sense of taste and smell is most important. Practically everybody has these, but they require training and practice.

Remember your senses are keenest when you have eaten only lightly or are slightly hungry. Tasting your milk regularly should pay off in dollars and cents, as an aid in producing the highest quality milk.

F. E. Fenton
Dairy Division, AMS

BIG TIMBER DEMAND JUMP IS LONG RANGE FORECAST

Production of timber products in 1957 (excluding fuel wood) is likely to be down 5 percent from the 1956 peak, the U. S. Forest Service estimates. But the long-range forecast for forestry owners is for a big jump in demand by 1975.

Best estimate of 1957 production is 9.2 billion cubic feet, compared with the 1956 record of 9.7 billion. But by 1975 demand may increase by 25 to 40 percent.

Naval Stores

Overall output of naval stores is expected to decline in 1957. Anticipated production increases in tall oil rosin and sulfate turpentine will be more than offset by declines in gum and steam-distilled wood rosin and gum and steam-distilled turpentine.

Sawlogs were expected to account for about 59 percent of the timber produced in 1957, pulpwood for 26 percent, veneer logs 6 percent, and miscellaneous products the remaining 9 percent.

Stumpage prices for most species in 1957, judging by National Forest timber sales for Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, southern pine, and sugar pine were down, but near record levels. The price softening was blamed on decreasing demand, particularly for sawlogs.

Lets break this estimate down by commodities:

Sawlogs—1957 production of 34.8 billion board-feet lumber tally, 6 percent under 1956. The decline reflects a drop in residential construction—the most important single use for lumber. Prices are somewhat below the levels of 1956.

Residential construction may not increase appreciably in the immediate future. Within a few years, however, a substantial rise is anticipated. This rise should result in increased demands for lumber and better markets and rising prices for sawlogs and stumpage.

Pulpwood—1957 production of 34 million cords would be 3 percent under 1956, but 10 percent higher than in 1955. The dip appears to be only temporary. It reflects a decreased demand for paper and paperboard. Softwoods, chiefly southern pine, western hemlock, spruce, and true firs, are expected to make up about 83 percent of the total production. Prices at local points of delivery were at or near an all-time peak in 1957.

Veneer logs—1957 production of 3.5 billion board-feet (2.5 billion softwoods, 1 billion hardwoods) would be 5 percent under the 1956 peak. Here, too, a lesser demand for residential construction played a part, reducing the demand for softwood plywood. Softwood prices are somewhat below the 1956 peak. Hardwood prices may be at or near a peak, although varying widely.

The long-range estimate of increased demand for timber products may turn out to have been conservative if the increase in population and in the goods and services is more than anticipated.

Resources Inadequate

In any event, within a few decades growth would be insufficient to meet and sustain all timber demands, particularly for the preferred softwood species, such as Douglas fir, and for high quality timber.

All these factors point to future supply problems and increased timber values, particularly for softwoods and high quality timber. There is likely to be pressure for greater use of hardwoods.

To the forest landowner and forest grower this means better market opportunities than in the past. It also emphasizes the need for strengthening efforts toward improving forest management.

Dwight Hair
U. S. Forest Service

FLAXSEED SUPPLIES ARE TIGHT

Domestic flaxseed supplies during the 1957–58 marketing year are tight. Output is down sharply. Stocks are low.

Production of 1957-crop flaxseed is placed at just under 26 million bushels, the smallest since 1946, and only slightly more than half the 1956 output.

The decline reflects sharply reduced yields, due mainly to the infestation of the "aster yellows" disease, and 12 percent less harvested acreage than last year. The yield per acre, 5.3 bushels, compares with 8.7 bushels last year and is the lowest since 1936.

CCC Stocks a Factor

Supplies in the current marketing year, including the flaxseed equivalent of linseed oil, are estimated at 50.3 million bushels, compared with 60 million last year. This year's supply includes carry-in stocks of 24.5 million bushels (again including the flaxseed equivalent of linseed oil), most of it held by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Domestic use of oil may be equivalent to about 26 million bushels of flaxseed and another 4 million will be needed for seed and feed.

With early season CCC export sales of 9 million bushels of flaxseed and 4 million bushels equivalent of linseed oil, carryover stocks of flaxseed and linseed oil probably will be less on July 1, 1958, than the relatively small commercial carryover of the current season. Commercial exports are expected to be negligible.

Farm prices at the beginning of the current marketing year averaged slightly under the support price of $2.92 per bushel and also averaged below those of a year earlier. Early supplies were heavy and crop prospects favorable. As stocks were reduced and crop conditions deteriorated, prices moved to a level slightly above support.

The season average price received by farmers is estimated at $3.02 per bushel, compared with $2.99 last year. A poorer quality of flaxseed and low oil content this year apparently about offset the price effect of the smaller supply.

Starting the current marketing year, linseed oil prices (raw, tank cars, Minneapolis) averaged 12.7 cents per pound, 0.7 cent less than July 1956. Prices since then have moved up sharply. In mid-December 1957 they were 15.0 cents per pound, nearly 1.5 cents above those of a year earlier.

Prospects are that linseed oil prices are likely to continue above those of a year earlier during the remainder of the marketing year. They are likely to go higher as supplies become scarce.

Flaxseed output in 1958–59 probably will exceed this year's short crop. If 1958 plantings are about the same as this year and growing conditions are normal, the flax crop would total about 50 million bushels.

No one can accurately predict whether the "aster yellows" disease will recur. The weather may be the decisive factor.

Prospects In 1958

The disappointing yields may discourage some farmers from producing flaxseed in 1958. On the other hand, relatively attractive flaxseed prices at planting time could be an incentive to others.

As a result of the tight situation and high prices of flaxseed and linseed oil, a considerable increase in early production of 1958 crop flaxseed is likely, particularly in California where harvest usually starts in May. An expansion in the early areas would tend to ease the tight situation at that time.

George W. Kromer
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

HOW DO YOU SELL YOUR TURKEYS?

Selling turkeys on a grade-and-yield basis usually puts more money in a grower's pocket. That, at least, is what 27 out of 32 Minnesota and Wisconsin turkey farmers reported in a recent survey by the Agricultural Marketing Service.

Selling on a flock-run average price basis was preferred by only 3 out of the 32. Two others could not decide which method they preferred.

How much were these net gains?

Grower Answers

Not many growers were specific on this point. Nineteen didn't answer the question. However, 12 of the other 13 estimated the gain at from small fractions of a cent per pound to 1.7 cents. The 13th grower maintained he got a better price by selling on a flock-run basis.

Of the 27 growers who favored the grade-yield basis, 15 stated flatly that it is the only fair way of selling. They pointed out there is no averaging of prices paid for good and poor flocks and each individual grower gets an exact reading on what his birds are worth.

Also, 12 of these growers said that since they have used the grade-and-yield system, they have increased the number of Grade A turkeys in their flocks. One grower remarked that he is now giving his birds more space on the farm because by doing this he has improved the average grade rating of his flocks.

How long have the surveyed growers been using the grade-and-yield system? More than half have given it a trial for more than 2 years. Some of them have used it as long as 10 years.

Of course, using this system means that the grower seldom has the fun of face-to-face bargaining with buyers. But the pleasure of getting a fairer price more than offset this, in the opinion of those surveyed. Buyers too often want to pay the same price for good flocks as for poor flocks, such growers maintain.

It's interesting that the other 3 growers—the ones who didn't prefer grade-and-yield—agree on this point. The 2 growers who use flock-run sales said that too many of their birds were downgraded. The third, undecided, grower felt that too many of his birds were condemned.

This survey is only part of a continuing AMS study of methods by which growers dispose of their turkeys at processing plants. The study is aimed at evaluating advantages and disadvantages of the two methods both to growers and to processors.

Earl H. Rinear
Marketing Research Division, AMS

Memo to Mothers

Do you know all about the National School Lunch Program? Nearly 12 million children are taking part in it this year.

The program is of special interest to farm mothers for two reasons. One is that it helps to provide better lunches for children at school. The second reason is that the school lunch program helps to boost the market for farm products.

Last year it made a market for $561 million worth of farm products, most of that food being bought from local producers and dealers.

Don't forget: The program helps the children to learn to eat properly—assuring their continued health, and a broad market for farm products in the future.

Outlook

Cotton and feed are the big news items this month.

Cotton

Reductions in stocks and production have cut the supply for 1957–58 to the lowest level since 1953. This year's crop is estimated at 10.9 million running bales, 2.3 million less than in 1956, and the least since 1950. Growers harvested over 2 million acres less than in 1956, mainly because of the Soil Bank. Yields were further reduced by bad weather.

The marketing year began with 11.2 million bales of old cotton at hand, 3.3 million less than the record stocks of a year earlier largely because of heavy exports. Total cotton supply—production, stocks, and imports—for 1957–58 is 22.2 million bales, down 5.4 million from 1956–57.

Further cuts in stocks are likely during the current marketing year. Exports are expected to total around 5.5 million bales and domestic use about 8.6 million. If these figures prove correct, carryover stocks would be reduced about 3 million bales.

Feed

Big and growing feed supply has pushed prices down. Fall prices to farmers for feed grains averaged the lowest since 1943. Hay was at a postwar low. Prices for high protein feeds were close to the postwar low of 1956.

Feed grain prices are likely to continue below a year earlier, through the spring at least. The proportion of the corn and sorghum grain crops carrying moisture too great for safe storage is larger than usual.

Low feed prices are generally favorable to production of livestock products. At mid-November prices, the hog-corn ratio was 20 percent higher than in mid-November 1956. Prices of most other livestock products also are high, compared with feed prices.

The ratios and storage factors are likely to encourage fairly heavy feeding, especially this winter. Exports also are likely to be heavy. But the supply appears large enough to meet these requirements and leave carryover stocks 20 to 25 percent higher at the end of the marketing year.

Livestock

Delayed marketings and heavier slaughter weights are occurring for both cattle and hogs. Marketings of fed cattle will increase seasonally and prices will decline after early 1958. Price discounts for heavy U. S. Choice and U. S. Prime cattle are likely if producers continue to feed beyond normal market weights.

Price discounts also are likely for overweight hogs. Because of delay in hog marketings this fall some further seasonal price declines may occur. Little recovery is likely until early spring.

Dairy

Purchases of dairy products for price support during the current marketing year which ends April 1, 1958, are expected to be equivalent to about 5 percent of milk production, compared with 4 percent the previous year. Per capita consumption is about the same, output up a little.

Eggs and Poultry

Egg production is likely to continue lower than a year ago and prices higher during the first half of 1958. Broiler production is running about a tenth above last year, and prices in the last quarter of 1957 have averaged the lowest in the year.

Potatoes

Winter prices are likely to exceed the low levels of a year ago. January 1 stocks are likely to be smaller and production reports indicate a smaller winter crop.

"Bert" Newell's Letter

"A sinful waste makes a woeful want." I grew up with that saying and it has got me into the habit of saving all sorts of stuff. I have so many little bits of this's and that's tucked around my shop it's just a mess.

Every now and then I make up my mind I'm going to throw away a lot of stuff that is useless, and then I get into a stew trying to figure out what is useless. How can you tell what you are going to need until you need it?

For example, just recently a knob pulled off my desk at home. So down in the bottom of my scrap box I searched out a little piece of mahogany a couple of inches long that was just the thing to make the repairs. I'll bet that piece of wood has been in that box for 15 or 20 years—so that's the way it goes.

It's gotten to be a sort of joke around my house, because any piece of wood, metal, or plastic that's found is usually laid up on a shelf in the kitchen for me to look at before it is thrown away. There's a little plastic thing on that shelf now I have been eying cautiously for the last week or two, because sooner or later——

All of this is apropos of our usual periodic review of our agricultural estimates program. As you know, we have a pretty heavy schedule of reports. I was looking over the 1958 program the other day. Do you know that we issue more than 500 reports during the year?

That's an average of almost two reports per working day. Furthermore, the timing is so tight that 6 Saturdays or Sundays are listed as dates for field reports to be received in Washington. Added to this there are quite a few major reports in our schedule that are scheduled for release on Monday which means that some parts of the Washington staff have to work weekends in order to meet these release dates.

There are quite a few of our folks who have forgotten what it's like to have the 4th of July off, or to eat Thanksgiving dinner at home. That's because the big July report has to go out on the 10th and at Thanksgiving time most of our Washington technical staff is out in the field assisting the State statisticians in the preparation for the big end-of-the-year acreage and production report.

I'm not complaining. We are all in this business by choice, but it does make us all aware of the program and the need for looking over the schedule carefully to see if we are doing some things that may not be necessary or really useful. Some of these decisions are pretty difficult to make because what may seem rather insignificant or unimportant to us will turn out to be very important to somebody else.

For example, a few years ago we were faced with an emergency and had to cut out some service to stay within our facilities. We picked out a few of the reports that we thought were least important.

Lo and behold, it turned out that they seemed to be the very things some producers needed most. My mail stacked up until I could hardly see over it.

There are some good things that come out of situations like this, however. Despite the fact that every now and then we get a letter suggesting that all of this crop and livestock estimating might be dropped, when it comes right down to cutting out some service we find that there are a lot more people who use the service and depend upon it than we sometimes realize.

Yes, we are going over our program for next year and we are going to try to eliminate unnecessary things. But I know beforehand that it is going to be just like it is in my shop. If I throw away something, in no time at all a situation will develop where that particular item will be just the thing I need.

S. R. Newell
Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

IT'S PACKAGED CARROTS BY A LANDSLIDE!

As recently as 1951, a scant 1 percent of fresh carrots marketed was sold prepackaged. Today more than 85 percent are prepackaged.

What does this mean to you, the carrot grower?

First, it means that the farmer has armed himself with the most modern of weapons to fight for his fair share of the increasingly competitive food market. The carrot grower is keeping abreast of the trend to compact, neatly packaged, convenience foods having top quality and meeting the highest standards of sanitation.

Grower's Brand Shown

When—as generally happens—the grower does his own packing, the attractive package carries the grower's brand through the entire marketing channel to the ultimate consumer. This provides a challenge to the farmer to ship only quality carrots if he hopes to establish and maintain a good reputation for his product.

Unlike bunched carrots, prepackaged carrots are topped at point of production. Thus there are no tops to pay freight on and there is no need to buy ice to keep the tops fresh. So transportation costs are lower.

What do retailers think of prepackaged carrots? They say prepackaged carrots reduced handling costs from 14 cents to 2 cents per sales dollar, waste and spoilage losses from 8 percent to less than 1 percent. Space requirements also are reduced.

The competition for space in both large and small stores continues to increase. Before prepacking, many stores with limited space and a limited clientele could not even sell the 72 bunches of carrots in the old standard crate before deterioration and spoilage set in.

In the old unpackaged days, the grocers said, consumers unintentionally damaged many carrots as they burrowed through the display seeking the best buy. This repeated handling wrecked the orderly arrangement of the bunches and was not altogether sanitary. And the carrot tops—inedible, but costing a lot to ship—wilted and deteriorated rapidly, particularly in the heat of summer.

Today, with prepackaging, the small store operator can always carry fresh carrots—and enjoy more opportunity to sell them—because the film bags extend their shelf-life.

Like the storekeepers, housewives preferred the prepackaged item, because the film bags kept the carrots fresher, crisper, and cleaner and there were no tops requiring removal and disposal. Hence, Mr. Grower, the possibility of wider markets for you today and in years to come.

But how did the retailer get the prepackaged carrots on his shelves in the first place?

Partly, at least, he owes this to men of vision in the carrot industry and to 10 years of economic and engineering methods research by the Marketing Research Division.

How It Began

The first try—like most first tries—wasn't successful. Back in the middle 1940's it was suggested that the tops of bunched carrots be cut off at the terminal warehouse. The edible roots then were placed in chipboard trays and over-wrapped with cellophane.

However, removal of the tops proved laborious and expensive. Worse, consumers didn't seem too enthusiastic.

Then the AMS experts, cooperating closely with pioneers in the industry, shifted their work from terminal market level to the point of production. Harvest hands were instructed to remove the tops in the field, and packing house crews were trained to package the carrot roots. True, this increased the requirements for packing labor. But, at the same time, it cut transpor-

tation and other charges for marketing the product.

Research conducted between 1951 and 1954 pointed the way to the development and adoption of more efficient and money-saving packaging methods, machinery, equipment, and production-line arrangements.

Since then, additional improvements have helped the swing toward 90 percent prepackaging of carrots and the possibility of bigger sales for you carrot growers.

Donald R. Stokes
Goodloe Barry
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PEA MARKETS MAY EXPAND THANKS TO USDA PRODUCT

Memo to pea growers: The U. S. Department of Agriculture has developed a new product, "dehydrofrozen peas," which may well increase the Nation's consumption of the types of peas normally reaching consumers in the frozen state.

The possibilities for wider use of your pea crop in institutions seem excellent, Market Development Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service, thinks after conducting a product test of dehydrofrozen peas in Milwaukee, Wis. The new product was developed in the Western Regional Research Laboratory of Agricultural Research Service.

First of all, what are dehydrofrozen peas? And what aren't they?

How It's Done

They are peas dehydrated to about 50 percent of their fresh weight and then frozen and packaged by the same process as regular frozen peas. They are not dried peas.

USDA experiments showed that this 50-percent reduction in weight did not affect the quality of the peas. But it did give the new product a major advantage over other frozen peas.

Growers know the importance of this. Freezer space, both for transportation and for storage, is usually at a premium in all outlets for frozen vegetables. A merchant can transport or store twice as many dehydrofrozen peas in the space he has available for frozen peas.

The AMS test in Milwaukee revealed that a majority of the restaurant managers given a sample of dehydrofrozen peas were willing to pay 3 cents per pound more for them on a reconstituted basis than they were paying, on an average, for other frozen peas.

Why? Well, the majority of the restaurant operators tested said they thought the new product retained its freshness, flavor, and appearance longer than other forms of peas. This was true even after they had been held on a steam table for a considerable time.

The USDA research also indicates that a net reduction in delivered cost of at least 2 cents per pound could be achieved by using the new product instead of frozen peas under commercial conditions.

The restaurant operators further told AMS they thought dehydrofrozen peas compared favorably with frozen peas in ease of preparation and cooking.

In addition, fruits and vegetables which can be dehydrofrozen have certain advantages over regular frozen products. They have less weight and bulk, little or no drip upon thawing, and better moisture control in the manufacturing of food products.

For the user of small individual amounts of peas, the new product has still another advantage: Better portion control. Because of dehydrofreezing, the peas are packed loose. It's easy to pour just the amount you need from the package into the cooking utensil.

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FARM POPULATION IS DOWN

In April 1957, about 20.4 million people lived on farms in the United States. In April 1950, the number was 25.1 million. This was a net decrease of about 4.7 million over the 7 years, even though births exceeded deaths in farm families during the period.

As of 1957, less than one-third of the farm population of the United States was between the ages of 18 and 44. Approximately another third were children under 14, and nearly a tenth were men and women 65 and older.

Age Groups

The oldest and youngest groups comprise larger proportions of the farm population in 1957 than in 1950. This distribution creates a high ratio of persons of dependent ages to those of working ages.

In April 1957, 38 percent of farm residents were employed in nonagricultural industries, compared with only 14 percent in 1930. In 1957, nearly 3 million farm resident people were working principally at nonfarm work. Of these, slightly over 1 million were women.

Nearness to metropolitan and other urban centers strongly influences farm-resident people in choosing their principal occupation. In metropolitan areas, 53 percent of the employed farm residents were in nonagricultural jobs; outside them, only 35 percent.

Back in George Washington's day, approximately nine-tenths of the 3.9 million people in the United States lived in rural areas, mainly on farms. For more than 120 years thereafter the number of United States farm people increased with the total population until the number attained a 1916 peak of 32.5 million. Since then, however, the trend has been generally downward, although with reversals in the early 1930's and immediately after World War II.

All this time, moreover, the proportion of farm people in the total United States population had been declining without interruption. In 1910, over a third of the population lived on farms. Between 1920 and 1950 the percentage dropped from 30.1 to 16.6. Today it is only 12 percent.

What are the major reasons?

Lowered requirements for manpower in agriculture. Increased opportunities for employment in nonagricultural industries. Unfavorable disparities in certain regions between farm and nonfarm incomes.

Other factors are: Search by farm people for educational advantages, change of residence for retired persons, quest for other opportunities. And many a young farm man who enters the armed services leaves the farm for good.

Because of the excess of births over deaths in farm families in most years, most of the farm population loss occurs through migration of farm residents to nonfarm residences.

The remaining loss is the net result of changes in the classification of dwelling units as farm or nonfarm. This factor has been substantial in recent years.

Rural Households Fewer

Accompanying the decrease in farm population has been a decrease in the number of rural farm households. On an average, rural farm households decreased about 150,000 a year between 1950 and 1957, while nonfarm households were increasing about 1 million a year.

In size, rural farm households are largest and urban households smallest in 1957. Farm households are more likely than nonfarm households to include both husband and wife, less likely to include only one person or unrelated persons living together.

Gladys K. Bowles
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MAYBE RICE CARRYOVER WILL BE CUT AGAIN

There's a smaller carryover in prospect for United States rice growers come next August 1. Here's the background:

The last (August 1, 1957) carryover of 20.1 million cwt., in terms of rough rice, was down sharply from the record 34.6 million cwt. a year earlier. This reflected very large exports, mostly Commodity Credit Corporation stocks moved under Government foreign aid programs. It also reflected a substantial cut in acreage.

Total Supplies

Total rice supplies in 1957–58 are estimated at 63.5 million cwt. This includes the carryover, the 1957 crop of 43.2 million cwt. and imports of 0.2 million cwt. Domestic use is expected to be about 27.2 million cwt. and exports about 19 million cwt.

On this basis, the carryover next August 1 would be 17.3 million cwt., a substantial cut from the August 1, 1957, figure. However, it would still be over three times the 1946–55 average of 5 million cwt.

The "certificate" or "two-price" marketing program authorized by the Agricultural Act of 1956 will not be in effect for the 1958 crop.

The national acreage allotment is 1,652,596 acres, the minimum permitted by law. The minimum national average support price is $4.33 per cwt. This reflects 75 percent of parity and compares with $4.72 per cwt., or 82 percent of parity for the 1957 crop.

Rice growers approved marketing quotas for the 1958 rice crop by a vote of 91 percent in the referendum held on December 10, according to the preliminary report. Quotas carried by the same percentage last year.

About 1,460,000 acres would be harvested in 1958, assuming that underplanting and abandonment total about 40,000, and that about 150,000 are placed in the Soil Bank.

If yields are the same as the 1955–57 average of 31.42 cwt. per harvested acre, a crop of 45.9 million cwt. would be produced. With domestic disappearance for 1958–59 estimated at 27.4 million cwt., a crop of this size would require exports in excess of about 18.5 million cwt. to reduce the carryover on August 1, 1959.

Exports in 1958–59 cannot be predicted yet. In 1957–58 they are expected to total about 19 million cwt., which is slightly below the 1951–55 average of 21.0 million, and sharply below the record large exports of 37.7 million cwt. in 1956–57.

Rice consumption in continental United States in 1956–57 amounted to 5.9 pounds per capita. This represents an increase in the last 3 years of 11 percent, from 5.3 pounds to 5.9 pounds. The 1949–53 average was 5.4 pounds.

Promotional work by the rice industry as well as the distribution of Commodity Credit Corporation stocks to schools and welfare institutions have contributed to the larger rice consumption.

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Farmers' Prices

(1910–14=100)

Date	Prices received by farmers	Parity index [1]	Parity ratio
December 1956	235	290	81
November 1957	242	298	81
December 1957	242	299	81

[1] Index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates.

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Farmer's Share of Consumer's Food Dollar

October 1956	40 percent
September 1957	40 percent
October 1957	39 percent

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